

# The Connecticut General Assembly

## Senate Democrats



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## SENS. MURPHY, PRAGUE, HANDLEY OPPOSE GOVERNOR'S TESTIMONY TO CONGRESS ON BUSH MEDICAID PLAN

**HARTFORD** – State Senator Christopher Murphy (D-Southington), co-chair of the Public Health Committee, State Senator Mary Ann Handley (D-Manchester), co-chair of the Human Services Committee, and State Senator Edith G. Prague (D-Columbia), co-chair of the Aging Committee, today criticized Governor Rowland's plan to not seek an increased Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for Connecticut in the coming biennial budget.

On Wednesday, March 12, members of Congress will hear testimony from Governor Rowland that Connecticut doesn't need or want an increased Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) as is contained in the bipartisan budget proposal, the lawmakers said. The Governor is also scheduled to testify in favor of President Bush's plan to end the Medicaid entitlement and begin block grants to states.

The three state senators and a number of other members of the General Assembly sent a letter to Connecticut's Congressional delegation today to let them know the Governor's plan "does not enjoy broad legislative support" in the Connecticut General Assembly. **(A COPY OF THAT LETTER HAS BEEN INCLUDED WITH THIS RELEASE).**

The letter states, "(Governor Rowland) talks about how we have expanded Medicaid coverage for adults with children to 150 percent of poverty, but he has just pushed to cut 23,000 of those same working parents from this program. He talks about how we have expanded our State-run pharmacy program for seniors, but he has just effectively cut access to prescription drugs for Connecticut's seniors by increasing the membership fee for this program by 20% and the co-pays by over 33%. His letter suggests that we need more flexibility in the Medicaid programs, but he is already cutting many of the 'optional' Medicaid benefits that help thousands of Connecticut residents."

"We are in the middle of a budget crisis, and the Governor has recently laid off nearly 3,000 state workers and knocked tens of thousands of residents off their health care plans, and now he is saying he doesn't want any increased federal assistance? That doesn't make any sense," **Sen. Murphy** said.

"I do not understand how we can say no to federal health care dollars at this point, when so many people have lost their health benefits due to budget cuts and families are struggling to find the means to

pay for coverage,” **Sen. Handley** said. “We are telling members of Congress that we strongly oppose the actions supported by the President and the Governor, and it is a priority of ours to protect those who most need our help.”

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The letter also criticizes Governor Rowland’s support of President Bush’s plan to fold all of the state’s Medicaid programs into block grants and to allow states the flexibility to curtail and cut Medicaid coverage, which the three lawmakers say will not work because the plan fails to offer enough resources to assist states that want to meet the growing needs of their unique populations.

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